THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Students, irrespective of caste, creed or religion, are expected to qualify the prescribed minimum criteria, failing which, they become ineligible to continue their studies. Students are also expelled from Institutes on disciplinary grounds.

Adulterated foodgrains under Mid-Day Meal Scheme

2215. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:
SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that foodgrains supplied under the Mid-Day Meal (MDM) Scheme to school children in most of the States are not fit for human consumption;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is no mechanism to check the quality of foodgrains being supplied under the MDM Scheme; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government to ensure that quality foodgrains are supplied under the Scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M.A.A. FATMI): (a) to (d) Under the Mid Day Meal (MDM) Programme, the food grains to be supplied by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) should be of best available quality, which will in any case be at least of Fair Average Quality (FAQ). FCI has appointed a Nodal Officer for each State to take care of various problems in supply of food grains. The District Collector/ECO of Zila Panchayat has been entrusted with the responsibility to ensure that food grains of at least FAQ are issued by FCI after joint inspection by a team consisting of FCI and the nominee of the Collector and/or Chief Executive Officer, District Panchayat. FCI has to keep samples of such food grains supplied by it for future verification and analysis, which should be available in case of any complaint(s) regarding the quality of food grains supplied.

As and when, such complaint is brought to the notice of the Government, the concerned State Government/UT Administration is asked to conduct suitable enquiry and to take appropriate action against the responsible person(s) and initiate corrective measures to avoid recurrence of such incidents in future.

Improvement of teaching standards

2216. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry has held discussions with VCs to improve teaching standards;

(b) if so, what were the main points discussed in the meeting and whether any action plan has been prepared in this regard;

(c) whether Cabinet has given its nod for 2500 model Government schools in the country;

(d) if so, by when they are likely to be started; and

(e) whether All India Students' Federation (AISF) has proposed for reforms in education sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. The University Grants Commission (UGC) has organized zonal and national conferences of Vice-Chancellors of Universities in the context of the Eleventh Plan. The main issues discussed pertain to improving teaching standards, research and examination system. The above issues highlighted in the Conferences have been taken into consideration in formulation the Eleventh Plan.

(c) and (d) A Centrally Sponsored Scheme to set up 2500 model schools in educationally backward blocks, to be managed by State Governments, has been launched by the Central Government during the current year. Proposals have been invited from the State Governments for being sanctioned subject to viability of such proposals.

(e) No such proposal has come to notice.

Setting up of special agencies for higher and professional education

2217. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) has urged Government to abolish the AICTE and set up special agencies for higher and professional education;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereon;

(c) whether the higher and professional education in the country needs special attention of Government; and

(d) if so, the likely steps Government proposes to take to improve merit and efficiency in higher and professional education?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) The Administrative Reforms Commission in its Ninth Report on 'SOCIAL CAPITAL' has recommended separation of professional education from the existing regulatory bodies and handing it over to specially created agencies for each of the streams of higher/professional education. These bodies may be called National Standards and Quality Council for each of such streams. The Commission further recommended that on creation of these separate councils the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) may stand abolished.